181 as the Pedis. I saw the two armies, the same day, preparing
703 for the same battle. The Thongas were armed to the teeth, forming a great circle, all standing, shouting their war songs, gesticulating, jumping, imploring their chief to allow them to start. The Pedi warriors were sitting under trees, taking their snuff and apparently as calm as any other day.

During the Gungunyane war, the Thongas were brave, at least those not entirely dependent on the Ngoni king, who had not allowed his warriors to kill white men. The Rongas of Mpfumu especially showed great courage and endurance, and those who served the Portuguese in their Angola war have been praised as being very steady and reliable.

177 On the other hand everything seems to prove that military
181 ability is not an ancient feature of the Thonga character, and
725 that it has been imparted to them by the Zulus, who taught them
721 the art of fighting during the last century, pushing them to the front in their battles and calling them "Mabuyandlela," "those who open the way." Before the Ngoni invasion, the Thonga armies were ignorant of the *mukhumbi* viz. the armed circle of warriors which is the basis of the Zulu military system; (See Part IV) : they used to form themselves into a straight line and, in their battles, very few men were killed. They were normal Bantu clans, viz. people living peacefully, occasionally quarrelling with their neighbours. The idea of conquest, of vast dominion, the system of an armed nation which Chaka and his followers pursued, was something new amongst South African Natives and was probably borrowed by Dingiswayo from the Whites. This fact ought not to be ignored.

Under a just European supervision, there is no probability that the Thonga tribe will change its peaceful and mild charcter.

142 3) *Physical characteristics of the Thongas.* It cannot be said that the Thongas possess a very distinct and unique physical type. They are generally of a dark brown colour, sometimes purely black, much darker than the Suthos. As a whole, their external appearance bears a much closer resemblance to that of the Zulus, but, as regards face and stature, they vary very much. You may meet Thongas with typical negro faces, broad lips, flat

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144 noses, prominent cheek bones, and the same day, at the same place, other men of the same clan with a much narrower face, thin lips and pointed noses. It seems that there are two different types amongst them, the coarse type which was perhaps more wide-spread amongst the primitive populations, and which has been kept very distinct by the Ba-Chopi of the Coast, and the finer, which belonged perhaps to the invaders, and both types have inter-crossed in all possible ways. There seems also to have been an Arabic influence in some of the clans. A Native Commissioner in the Zoutpansberg has noticed amongst some of the Thonga settlements striking Semitic features, arched noses, thin lips. Has there been any intermarriage between the Thongas and those Arabs who settled on the East Coast long before it was discovered by Vasco de Gama ? Who can say ?

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

854 is to lessen the dangers of growth (pumba nombo), so that the sickness should not be too bad. (These are the milombyana,

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Phot. A. Bore

Girls with babies at Makulane
(Mapunju country.)

304 right!" When the Ba-Ngoni of the XIXth century came, they submitted themselves to the custom, not from fear of mockery, but to hide their Zulu nationality. Chaka had sent his impis to kill them and, as they were recognised by the absence of pimples, they began to tattoo themselves. When the danger was passed,

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Phot. H.-A. Junod.
Tattooed women of the Nkuna clan.

they ceased to perform the operation. They began in their turn to mock the Thongas who had followed their example.

304 881 Amongst the Ba-Ronga it is not certain that the big black pimples ever existed. In former times men used to make two lines of small pimples on both sides of the body, extending from the nipple and from the shoulders downwards. Now the custom

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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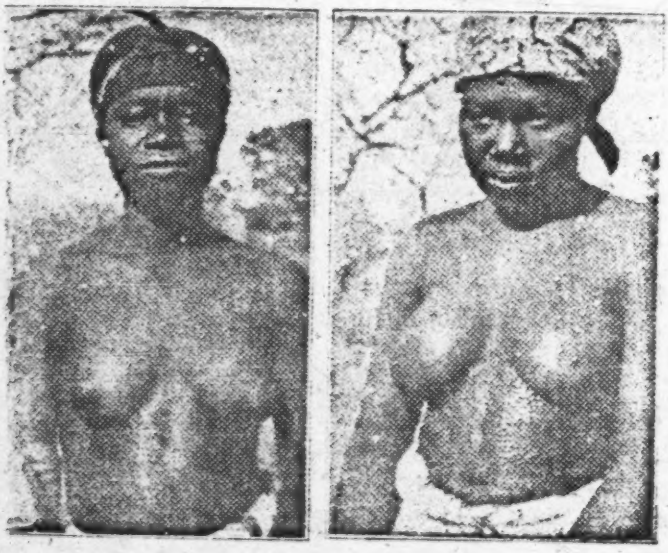
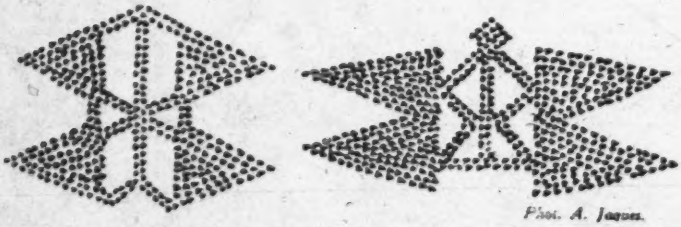
these days, or to go to the village to eat the food of other people (just as it is for boys who pierce their ears). Girls prepare themselves for the operation by eating a special food which soften-





Phot. A. Jaques.

Tattooed women of the Tembe clan.

the skin of the belly (nabyala khuri). All these rules tend to show that, in former times, tattooing had a deep meaning, a ritual value which has more or less disappeared. Mboza told me : "It is not a regular taboo (yila), but only a custom (shihila) of the country."

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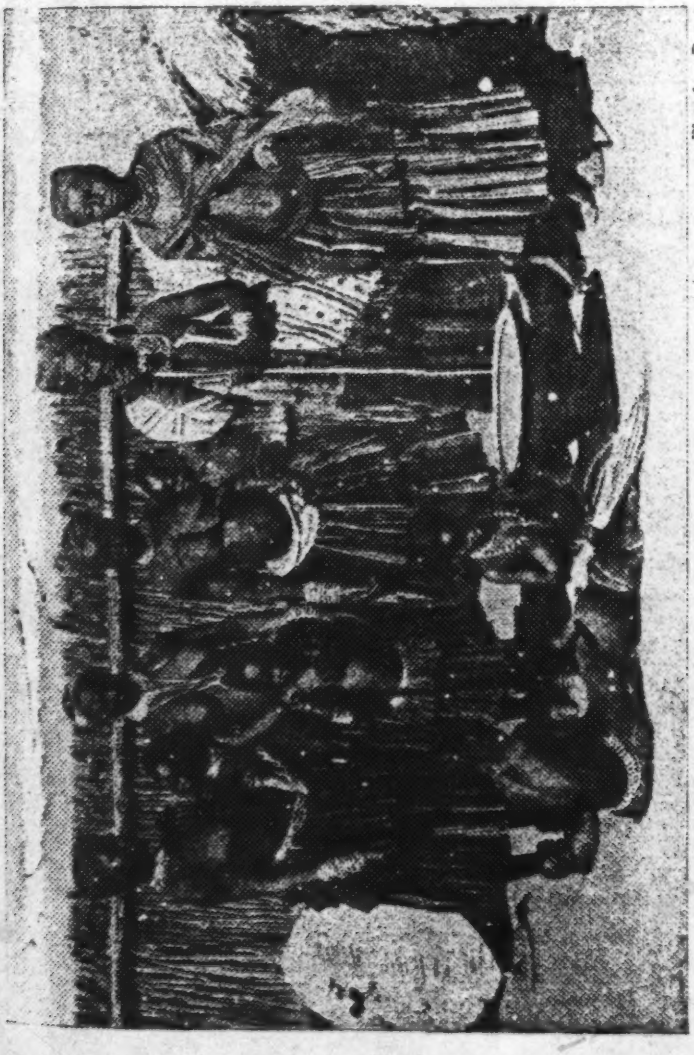

Phot. from Prévôts

Thonga women of the Transvaal.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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which is very cunning : it pricks up its ears, it prepares itself for defence, when attacked!

Tail of nsimango, you are like Muhlaba, you are of a great beauty, you are shining inside the forest, the black forest, you are sparkling, kati-kati-kati, (1) a man may truly fear when he sees you!

Give them meat, that they may all eat! Give your men the foreleg,

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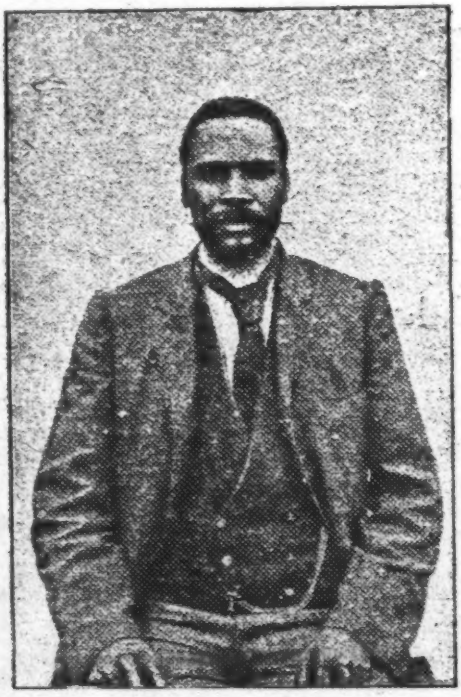

Muhlaba, the Chief of the Nkuna clan. *Phot. A. Borel.*

give them the hindleg, that they may all eat to their hearts' content... Pull their legs forward (ba koke milenge), so that they fall back in terror of you!

Why do you govern them so mildly! Look at them with terrible

(1) Descriptive adverb.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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put forward in short sentences, generally interrogative, by one of the counsellors. The assembly listens in silence until the mover concludes with an energetic "Ahina," being the equivalent of "That's all right." (See p. 354.) Another individuai elaborates the matter further, saying: "Did you not hear what he said? He said so and so." This is the way of seconding the motion. The debate proceeds, and, little by little, objections are brought forward and the assembly comes to a decision.

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Phot. A. Burd.
An habitué of the Nkuna Court.

It often happens that the chief does not say a word; when he see that the counsellors are agreed and if he has no objection, he merely shows his assent by nodding his head. So the decision is arrived at without his intervention and without any vote being taken. The voice of the majority has not been ascertained by any show of hands, but it is generally perceived by intuition in a very remarkable way, and grave counsellors, who have been squatting in a circle all through the discussion, jump to their feet and disperse, knowing perfectly well what has been decided. If however the counsellors do not agree, they put the matter into the hands of the chief, and the chief, after having listened to the arguments pro and con, "cuts the matter" (tjema mhaka) by some short sentences, after which everybody must shout the royal salutation: "Bayete!"

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When there are two parties present, the debate is conducted according to other rules. For instance, if a stranger wishes to have speech with a chief or to proffer some request, he is generally accompanied by a counsellor. The chief, together with some of his men, receives him either in the hut, if the affair must

301 out that this custom probably had a social significance in former times, though at present it is practised as an adornment.

302 As regards *hair* (nsisi, mu-mi), women often cut it, men less

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Maputju women with "tingoya."

302 frequently. A man only cuts his hair when his wife dies, as a [765] sign of mourning : it is a taboo (I. p. 146). In former times they never shaved their beards. People made fun of those who did so, saying : "Are you an Angolese?" (The Angolese, who are numerous in the neighbourhood of Lourenço-Marques,

538 if this rule is not followed, the transgressor will become bald!
461 This is one of the most surprising of the lesser taboos of the tribe. What is its origin? Have the Natives noticed that famous story-tellers, those who practised their art day and night, were liable to this misfortune? I could get no information on this point. I rather think the prohibition comes from the fact that this game is so popular that they are afraid to devote too much time to it: people would lose all inclination for work, if they started it during the day. So they instinctively forbade story-telling in the day-time!

[142 538]

Phot. A. Borel.

Martha, a Ronga story-teller.

Another curious custom in connection with tales is this: when a story-teller comes to the end of his tale, he concludes with the following words: "Tju-tju... famba ka Gwambe ni Dzabana!" — "Run away, go to Gwambe and Dzabana." These two personages are believed, at least amongst the Northern clans, to have been the first man and the first woman (see Part VI), and I suppose that the object of this kind of incantation is to prevent the marvellous story haunting the hearers during the night, and troubling their sleep by disagreeable dreams. It is a means of returning from fairyland to the realms of every-day life! All these details tend to show the importance of folk-tales in the Native life, and their popularity amongst the tribe.